

Thomas Jefferson to John Wayles Eppes, September 9, 1814 , from The Works of Thomas Jefferson in Twelve Volumes. Federal Edition. Collected and Edited by Paul Leicester Ford.

TO JOHN WAYLES EPPES J. MSS.

Monticello, Sep /9. 14.

Dear Sir, —I am sorry to learn by Francis's letter that you are not yet recovered from your rheumatism, and much wonder you do not go and pass a summer at the warm springs. From the examples I have seen I should entertain no doubt of a radical cure. The transactions at Washington and Alexandria are indeed beyond expectation. The circumjacent country is mostly disaffected, but I should have thought the motions of the enemy long enough known, and their object probable enough to have called the well affected counties of Virginia & Maryland into place. Nobody who knows the President can doubt but that he has honestly done everything he could to the best of his judgment. And there is no sounder judgment than his. I cannot account for what has happened but by giving credit to the rumors which circulate against Armstrong, who is presumptuous, obstinate & injudicious. I should hope the law would lay hold of Sims &c. if it could lay hold of anything after the experiment on Burr. But Congress itself can punish Alexandria, by repealing the law which made it a town, by discontinuing it as a port of entry or clearance, and perhaps by suppressing it's banks. But I expect all will go off with impunity. If our government ever falls, it will be from this weakness. No government can be maintained without the principle of fear as well as of duty. Good men will obey the last, but bad ones the former only. Our county is a desert. None are to be met in the roads but grayheads. About 800 men are gone from it, & chiefly volunteers. But I fear they cannot be armed. I

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think the truth must now be obvious that our people are too happy at home to enter into regular service, and that we cannot be defended but by making every citizen a souldier, as the Greeks & Romans who had no standing armies, & that in doing this all must be marshalled, classed by their ages, & every service ascribed to it's competent class. Ever affectionately yours.